

May 7, 2024

Senator Brian Schatz
Chair, Senate Appropriations
Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing, and Urban Development
184 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20002

Representative Steve Womack Chair,
House Appropriations Subcommittee
on Transportation, Housing, and Urban
Development
2358-A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith
Ranking Member, Senate
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Transportation, Housing, and Urban
Development
156 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20002

Representative Mike Quigley
Ranking Member, House
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Transportation, Housing, and Urban
Development
1036 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Schatz, Senator Hyde-Smith, Representative Womack and
Representative Quigley:

The Washington State Ferry system is in crisis. We are local elected officials from ferry communities across all corners of Puget Sound joining together to call upon our federal lawmakers to make robust investments in federal ferry programs to ensure Washington State Ferries (WSF) has needed resources to urgently restore full ferry system service.

Ferries are an essential part of our local communities. They bring tourists to our homegrown small businesses, hotels and restaurants. They transport our residents to life-saving medical appointments. They provide access to family and cultural connections. They get people to and from their jobs.

Right now, the Service Contingency Plan has the fleet operating at only 15 vessels, while WSF relays that 26 vessels are needed to operate at full service and allow for

necessary planned maintenance. This drastic reduction in service is resulting in significant impacts on our residents and businesses who rely on ferry service.

We thank the Washington Delegation for the over \$140 million in federal grants Washington State Ferries received over the last 2 fiscal years. We are also grateful for the additional ferry program investments made in FY 2024 appropriations. We especially appreciate the definition change for the Ferry Service for Rural Communities Program that makes the San Juan routes eligible for funding.

We recommend the following ferry programs be funded at the highest possible level in the FY 2025 budget:

- Passenger Ferry Grant Program
- Ferry Service for Rural Communities Program
- Electric or Low-Emitting Ferry Pilot Program

Action must be taken to preserve our marine highway system for our residents, businesses, and visitors. Please ensure there funding for ferries and ferry communities are a priority in FY 2025 appropriations.

Sincerely,

Counties

Island County

Commissioner Janet St. Clair

Kitsap County

Commissioner Charlotte Garrido

Commissioner Katie Walters

King County

Councilmember Teresa Mosqueda

Pierce County

Council Chair Ryan Mello

San Juan County

Council Chair Jane Fuller

Council Member Christine Minney

Council Member Cindy Wolf

Skagit County

Commissioner Lisa Janicki

Commissioner Peter Browning

Commissioner Ron Wesen

Snohomish County

Councilmember Megan Dunn

Cities

City of Anacortes

Mayor Matt Miller

Councilmember Carolyn Moulton

Councilmember Ryan Walters

City of Bainbridge Island

Mayor Joe Deets

Deputy Mayor Jon Quitslund

Councilmember Ashley Mathews

City of Bremerton

Mayor Greg Wheeler

Councilmember Denise Frey

Councilmember Jane Rebelowski

Councilmember Jeff Coughlin

Councilmember Anna Mockler

Councilmember Michael Goodnow

City of Des Moines

Mayor Traci Buxton

Ports

Port of Bremerton

Commissioner Cary Bozeman

Commissioner Axel Strakeljahn

Town of Friday Harbor

Mayor Raymont Jackson

Councilmember Anna Maria de Freitas

Councilmember Richard Geffen

Councilmember Steve Hushebeck

Councilmember Barbara Starr

Councilmember Mason Turnage

City of Port Orchard

Mayor Rob Putaansuu

City of Poulsbo

Mayor Rebecca Erickson

Councilmember Gary McVey

City of Seattle

Councilmember Rob Saka

Port of Silverdale

Commissioner Caleb Reese